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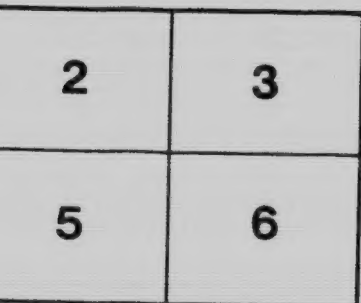
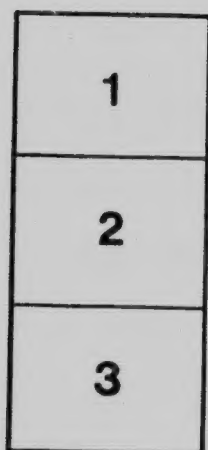
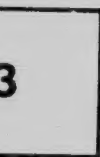
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—Longfellow's *Evangeline*.

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processions and visitations, as I heard them from the lips of the *Conteurs*, in the rural districts, in this province. Some of those notes, unfortunately, have perished through the various accidents of time, while some of the folk-lore which I entrusted to fickle memory, now presents itself in my mind somewhat confusedly. Before the flood of time will have swept more of them away from the ken of the race, it might be well to place those now accessible beyond danger of loss. There can be no doubt that French-Canadian folk-lore has not been sufficiently sung and appreciated. We must not forget that we are indebted to those drivers-away of care, and whilers of the passing hour, for the sacred heritage of many historic memories, and the preservation of many legends and traditions. A desire to make known those in my possession has obsessed me for a long while, and to-day this feeling returns with increased eagerness.

When but a slip of a lad, I passed several summer and winter vacations in the neighboring counties, among the French-Canadian habitants. The delights of those localities at such seasons are inexhaustible, and transcend all powers of description. Across the intervening years their charms and loveliness

still call to me with attractions unimpaired and unsurpassed. In 1896, with a congenial companion, I re-visited some of the old haunts of my boyhood days. I wished to renew old acquaintances, recall past experiences, and ascertain if the legendary lore had undergone any material changes. During my stay in the country in the old days I had made comrades of a few of the sons of farmers, in the pastime of fishing and shooting. I had often dallied with them on broad and sunny slopes, tramped the forest in their company, gun and rod in hand, and paddled over waveless lakes of a sunny day, when they mirrored the beautiful colors of sky and scenery of adjacent shores, and also when their waters arose to the breeze, simulating tossing fields of green-pointed hillocks, or white billows. Escapades and larks of various kinds, I had enjoyed with those light-hearted and gay souls. During those days of idleness and contentment, the hours slipped by unperceived, the excitement of the moment absorbing us completely. It was only when the glow of day began to fade and darkness was setting in, that we bethought ourselves of returning to the fireside.

Our accompaniments homeward were the rapt voices of the forest singing their weird sagas, the wonderful winged crea-

tures of the night flitting about like spirits of fire, and myriads of insects swarming over the ground boldly or in unsuspected seclusion of the woods. And to add an eerier touch to our emotions, there would be the screech of the night-hawk and the plaintive whistle of whip-poor-will. The latter has often been compared by the superstitious to the call of a widowed soul for its mate, out of the boundless expanse, and it certainly increased juvenile fears. These acts of animated creatures and the mysterious murmurs of nature, if properly interpreted, might enable us to understand some of the unfathomed wisdom of the forest, and mysterious riddles of the universe. When we shake off the dust of the body we may then interpret, through some sense unknown to earthly sight, some of the things that at present transcend our powers of explanation.

We were received by the companions of my early days and their parents with outstretched hands and friendly manifestations. Their faces glowed with homely hospitality and with joyous outpourings of cheerful, warm hearts. But several of them, alas, had disappeared, which not a little saddened my spirits. Some had emigrated to the United States (*par en haut*, they say), others, whom I

had left overflowing and abounding in life and vigor, had joined "the great and silent majority". Among those remaining, some had fallen into pleasant lines, while others had the cup of bitterness too closely pressed upon their lips. The Great Distributor of joys and sorrows has inexplicable, inexorable ways.

I have but to close my eyes and there rises before me, across the intervening years, many forms not vague and shadowy, but as large and material as when in the flesh, passing back and forth, of ones who were kind to me in the days referred to, and contributed much to make my stay among them pleasant and delightful. There were two of them, especially, who were the embodiment of airy gayety and kindly fun. Many grateful recollections and many happy hours hover over their memory! Those were days when we took and gave with spirit, in the game of chaff, when we laughed and chattered and played pranks on one another. It gives me a twinge to remember the fullness and remoteness of those experiences and the transitoriness of all life's prides and pleasures, particularly when I realize that the stage of donning an old man's gown and slippers is approaching, and the Gates of Time will swing behind me ere long.

With regard to the Folk-lore, concerning which I wished to refresh my memory, I found that while it corresponded in its leading features, to the original legends and narratives I had formerly heard, some had undergone modifications. Parts were pruned and clipped and retouched, new idioms, idiosyncrasies and fresh points of view introduced. These, doubtless, were due to the freer intercourse of the story-tellers with the outside world and the whims and moods of successive personalities. Before further mutilations and alterations have taken place, there should be rescued from impending oblivion, what is still available in French-Canadian lore. The Conteurs, of the kind I knew, have virtually disappeared, and in truth they would be out of harmony with present times. The practical isolation of those living in farming regions, in the old days, developed character and eccentric traits, while the present easy communication with the cities, and the trend of thought of the times, with its deadening pressure of the proper and commonplace, do not favor the formation of original and whimsical individuals. Since the people in the country have begun trying to catch up with the world's progress, and the present strenuous practical life,

it is pretty much a constant struggle with them to secure a fair living. The treadmill loads many have to carry, create a mental unrest that few knew in the easy-going, ancient days. With them, as with the town people, it is often *une course a la mort* for daily existence. They have no time now to live in the past or in dreamland!

Curious and sensitive in the days in question, I listened with bated breath, gripped with irresistible force, to the marvels relating to the thrilling legends and traditions, to the harrowing visits of the spirit world, the martyrdom of the original missionaries, and to the massacre of the early colonists by the Indians. I remember we would sit or lounge about, regardless of special provision for comfort, if only we might be near enough to the conteur to feel the effect of his haunting, magical words and magnetic periods. No words can describe my fears and trepidations as I nestled close to the older boys, yearning for shelter and protection, which pride prevented exhibiting. Meanwhile my senses were quivering with expectations of the unknown. Such felings would be aggravated to horror on going to bed, when the covered head, beating heart and trembling limbs bore testimony to the

vivid fancy of the juvenile sufferer, and the graphic power of the narrator. My waking hours would be haunted by The Evil Eye (*Mauvais Oeil*). Many a time in the gloaming I saw shadowy figures rise out of a world of silence, and hideous forms lurking in the shadow of trees and houses. If I passed by a graveyard, at night, or if I heard a noise in lonely places, I felt cold shudders running down my back and my young frame wrung with keen anguish. Even youthful sleep had its nightmare, its horrid spectres to prolong and intensify the alarm. Yet, such was the fascination, that the resolution never again to listen to such recitals would be broken the very next night, when the gathering circle welcomed the arrival of the compelling story-teller. The moment he appeared he wove his spell; a hush would fall over all, and he commanded rapt attention for the remainder of the evening.

These homeless nomads were generally found among the regular beggars ("*queteux de profession*"), who travelled from one county to another. Their route would be occasionally extended over a whole district. They were given food and lodging for the asking and allowed to come and go as they pleased. For days, even weeks, they would remain un-

der one roof, without being questioned. They were considered God's poor, and looked after, out of true pity; some of these people seek to save their souls by alms-giving. They believe that the presence of beggars in the house is a benediction. By the children they were looked upon with awe and grateful admiration, and by the elders with suspicion and yet sympathy.

They had their virtues as well as their faults. They abhorred work, were never in a hurry, but were always ready to prate for hours at a time. They were carriers of news and gossip from one place to another, generally of a kindly nature, but frequently their budgets gathered much unearned and uncharitable increment on the way. They have been known to take advantage of the superstition of the people who think them capable of casting spells (*jeter un sort*) upon those who displeased or annoyed them. Numerous instances would be cited of the misfortunes and calamities in households or their members that they had caused—even to blasting a whole harvest, kill all the farm-stock, or occasion widespread ill-luck. Some resorted to buffoonery and impishness! Others preferred to dissemble and arrayed themselves, figuratively speaking, in

dunce cap and bedecked in motley, at the mercy of any trickster, but *bien fol qui s'y fie*. Any attempt to befool such, generally ended in the ridiculous discomfiture of the would-be joker. Many more, however, would assume a manner mysterious and oracular, more befitting their vocation.

There is in the blood of most of these tramps a stirring Bohemian instinct, which country life sends galloping through their veins. They were at home and contented in the country among their own, while they felt bewildered and lost in cities. They were shrewd observers and little escaped them, while in their own bailiwick. A keen knowledge of the people, their family history for generations, their joys and sorrows, their hopes and passions they possessed, and sympathetically and graphically dwelt upon them during their rounds. They did this in quaint and shrewd ways, sometimes humorously. The foible of those about them, they seized upon and ridiculed, but they also exalted their good qualities. Under provocation they readily picked to pieces the character of the offender; on the other hand their affection or loyalty would not waver or moult a feather towards those who had befriended them. Of course in-

stances of ingratitude among them were not infrequent, as in other walks of life. They certainly knew how to vent their indignation over fancied or real wrongs of their own, and likewise vigorously championed the quarrels of their hosts. They were sure "to turn up" when sympathy was called for, or when there was cause for rejoicing. They then acted as if they were one of the family, and in a matter of course way they participated in the good things provided during such occasions. With tact they would dwell upon the inscrutable wisdom of Providence and urge upon their hearers the acceptance of its decrees—resignation and submission in the one case, and appreciation and thankfulness in the other. Often they expressed opinions embodying much simple and practical philosophy, and not seldom exhibited a *penchant* for raillery and ironic allusion, of a primitive form. As might be imagined, their humor was crude (*gros sel*), their jests of the broad kind (*grosses farces*) and as a rule without too much malice. "It scratched, but it did not flay". Often it was not so much what they said, as their manner of saying it, emphasized with a shrug of the shoulder, a particular inflection of the voice, a significant glance. Their delivery was generally character-

ized by eccentricity of manner, speech and action.

From time to time prodigies in the folk-lore line, and of marked cleverness and intelligence, have flashed upon the circuits mentioned—prodigies of wonderful memories and powerful imaginations. It was not seldom an inheritance with them, for the vocation of the French-Canadian story-teller (*queteu*) was frequently transmitted from father to son, generation after generation. These natural-born conteurs had at their command repertoires of wide range and variety, with a large stock of lays and ballads (*complaintes*). They could at will unfold blood curdling events, stories of dreadful, hideous monsters, of all powerful genii, of ghastly and vivid apparitions, unearthly calls and warnings—in fact all the shocking material known to human consciousness. They had also no end of rollicking yarns, of myths and traditions, and legends with comical and tragical elements, ever ready on their lips. To me they always appeared eager to draw from their capacious store-houses. Aided by their memories and imaginative faculties they peopled the country with the heroes, the sinners and martyrs of old; they made noble lives convey eloquent lessons, and base na-

tures doleful warnings, enveloping them with thrilling complications and dramatic climaxes. With facility and felicity, they caused their characters to appear in life-like color and proportion, presenting them from the pinnacle of the past. They had a certain familiarity with the brilliant events and heroic episodes of Canadian history, but they often erred in the details and dates. I have noticed that they rarely spun the threads of their narratives outside of their native province, although they frequently alluded to La Belle France in affectionate terms and in a spirit of devotion. In some respects these prodigies remind one of the troubadours of old, but perhaps this comparison dignifies them too much.

These silver-tongued folk would gild the common-place with shrewd and bright observations, would touch the dead past and cause it skillfully to glow with some of the old intensity, and draw from it practical and philosophical deductions. They would also extract new flavor from old subjects and scenes, give new twists to old affairs and dignify an insignificant incident in early colonial days. And again their creative minds would body forth forms and shapes unknown, or they would give airy things a local habitat. They produced thrilling

effects by simple and natural expedients. In a quiet gradual way they developed their stories, and at the moment of the *denouement* they had their auditors breathless. Many a pun has been placed to their credit with an occasional *bon mot* that would honor wits of higher pretensions. Most of their puns are not translatable into English, or at any rate would in the translation lose much of their potency. They charged their words with such emotional power and magnetism that they gripped the feelings with a strong hold. At times the enthrallment was such that the young would remain with them until even the gray of dawn.

These petitioners for alms were not all equally clever and entertaining, as may be readily surmised; but the less gifted served to whet the appetite for the more skilled. With some, speech was a birth-throe; the progeny, however, was fairly vigorous and sturdy, when born. Their phraseology was generally quaint, picturesque and weirdly expressive, not, however, influenced in the least by the tyrannies of orthography. Their delivery was in a flat evenness of enunciation with gestures lacking gracefulness. They frequently used too many unnecessary words; the bright things said were but too often intermingled with the com-

monplace and the stereotyped. When cornered by a defective memory or if imagination failed them, they would resort to antiquated, round-about sentences such as certain rhetoricians fall back upon under the same conditions. Their misuse of words, a la Partington and a la Prudhomme, were many and side-splitting. There was one in particular whom I recall who loved to resort to sonorous polysyllables and to platitudinisms which he uttered with solemnity and aplomb. He did this with such decided airs of self-satisfaction that the task, on the part of his auditors, to suppress laughter was difficult indeed. I also knew a character of the same kind who left this city for Ottawa in 1867 and whom I might dub the Prudhomme of Canada. Later, through the pen of Louis Honore Frechette, this individual became famous.

Certain conditions of the elements contributed to increase the impressions the story-tellers ordinarily made. The recital of such lugubrious, gruesome tales, while the storm-king's wrath and fury were in full blast, punctuated every few moments by flashes of livid lightning and deafening rolls of thunder, causing the house to vibrate, and a deluge of rain smoting the window panes, considerably

heightened the awe of the listeners. To hear the oracle's voice weirdly blending with the whirr of a belated bat, the chirping of sleepless crickets, or the eerie croaking of frogs, of a quiet summer's night, of brilliant darkness, the heavens studded with a glorious pageant of stars, would send creepy sensations along most youth's spine. Nor are these goose-flesh effects less, of winter nights, when the fields and forests are sheeted in white and clothed in dreary desolation, hail whirling, clashing and pelting the weary and half frantic traveller, wild winds wailing and screaming and roaring sweepingly along, shaking the house to its foundations. Meanwhile the superstitious group would be crouching in corners, furtiv'ly crossing themselves from time to time, in dread of a visit or a dismal warning cry from some night-haunting goblin of whom they have been hearing all their lives. When we are in the grip of one of our fierce summer or winter storms, I am often reminded of these old tales of darkness and their attendant scenes.

Their lays and ballads were numerous and various, appealing to feelings and sentiments both serious and comical. The situations in some not seldom take on the dignity of an epic with

lyrical passages; most of them, however, lack vigor in action and in the character. Many abounded in springs of melancholy; some were full of light-heartedness, brimful of pranks, charged with the salt of eternal youth and love; others take you through a tangle of sophistry or echo the struggles and trials of their ancestors; others still treat of life as a melancholy pageant with the grave for its goal. They are sung with rustic simplicity and in a minor plaintive key. I occasionally find myself humming some of the old refrains, especially when revisiting the old haunts.

I well remember the conteur's tricks and arts, and their habitual methods of opening and closing their *seances*. *Il y avait une fois* (once upon a time) was their well-known opening phrase. To the old and young it was the key to treasures of memory and fancy. However, tempted by the humor or the incidents of a story, they generally avoided everything indelicate, breaking the force of doubtful expressions by the formula, *sauf votre respect*, resembling the old British or Irish apology "saving your presence" so familiar to the old country people of a former generation. The more fanciful tales they would conclude with some such sentence as, *Et tric, tric,*

mon conte est fini, or, Et tric, mon conte est achevé, or again,

Et cric, crac, mon conte est fini

Pour un sou dis en un plus joli.

(And cric, crac, my story is told, for a farthing tell a better one). If asked from whom they derived their budget of stories, they readily gave the name of some celebrity of the district long deceased, who in turn, had acquired them from another still earlier gathered to his forefathers. But they would as often say, 3.—French-Canadian Conteur H T8 *Tout le monde* (everybody). They almost all wound up their stories with a modest, and yet self-satisfied suggestion of deprecation. These word-painters were never at a loss to explain away a doubtful point, historical lapse or anachronism. The presence of a stranger in the company was often an embarrassment, but a sympathetic manner or a touch of genial humor would promptly put them at their ease.

It was only a short year before the demise of my old chum, the late Faucher de Saint Maurice, that I returned to the scenes of my youthful experiences. He was my companion on that occasion. He was a stranger to the localities in question, and to the people living therein, for, during college days, he passed his

summers at Bellechasse. At the time I am writing about, I was on a visit from Boston, where I had taken up my abode since 1883. Faucher and I thought that the trip would afford us an opportunity of indulging in one of our old rambles in the fields of thought and reminiscences, and besides he too was greatly interested in all relating to Folk-lore. We started on our journey, as we had many times before, and at various seasons of the year—of a cold autumn morning, with a sky clouded with argosies ploughing the blue with all sails set, but soon a flood of golden sunshine sent a glow, like an elixir of life, coursing through our veins. The day alternated between brightness and gloom, rapid interplays of vivid shafts of warm sunlight, followed by intervals of darkness. At one moment the overcast heavens would darken and partially becloud objects, and then as the sun reappeared they would loom sharply cut and in distinct outline. The woodland was beautifully blotched here and there by trees covered with leaves, of brilliant autumnal hues, and the birds were blithely twanging their lyres. Faucher's health had been declining for some months previous, and on the start his feelings were at ebb-tide, but we had not proceeded far, when the joyous and exhilarating

air, and scenic attractions, scattered transitorily his aches and troubles and cares. Presently he became the lively, jolly companion of old; his conversation abounded in wit and cleverness, and charmingly and sympathetically he dwelt upon our common experiences in the past, and his own, in particular, since we had parted. He appealed to feelings and sentiments, both serious and comical, and with rare felicity, even for him; he next took up several ancient events, renowned in song and story, some old traditions and historical incidents, and treated them in an easy, off-handed, natural way. There was a fascination and finesse in his interpretations. Each of these, after they had passed through the alembic of his mind, re-appeared in new and more alluring form, and yet without any deviation from the main facts. He also re-created old characters, historical and mythical, presenting them with piquant newness. This process might be styled a re-bottling of old wines. His sense of word values and subtleness of implication, seemed as keen as in his brightest days, and frequently he would use a word that conjured an immediate and complete image. *Mots qui font image*, the French say, and he was always skillful at that. A world of meaning he could convey by

an inflection of the voice, a gesture, a glance of the eye, and with the accuracy of an artist. That day his head appeared nobler than ever, his mouth more sensitive, his nostrils more flexible, his voice more musical, and his gestures more dignified and gracious. As of yore, when nervous, he often kept stroking his beard downwards, a very characteristic act of his when he made a telling point.

My dear old friend had hardly been a half hour among the people we were calling upon, before he had hypnotized and enchanted them all by his *verve* and *entrain*, his sociability, and adaptability to their moods and inclinations. In the evening, after we had drawn from the story-tellers all the tales they could recall, Faucher began communicating to them some myths and legends and yarns he had heard from people living along the shores of the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, and he followed these with a phantasmagoria of amusing incidents or episodes, in which wisdom or logic had little or no place. He was superb, marvellous and exquisite! The strain of the Gascon blood in his veins was writ all over his narratives.

At the present moment there flashes forth upon the screen of memory, many French-Canadian legends and traditions.

but it is not my purpose, for the nonce, to place before the readers of the DAILY TELEGRAPH more than a few specimens of French-Canadian lore. I may premise, too, that it is not my intention to present them in the conteur's own whimsical, quaint phrasing, or odd rhetorical methods. I shall content myself with telling each story within as narrow a compass as possible, but at sufficient length to convey the intent of the original. I have purposely avoided those of the gruesome, harrowing kind, which make one's flesh creep.

In these folks' repertory there figure many stories concerning Satan (*Le vieux Charlot*, as they have nicknamed him), and his schemes to win hapless souls. A few of them will enable the curious to form an idea of the others. According to tradition the devil is always in waiting to answer calls from mortals. If a man offers his soul for sale, there is no haggling as to the price; Satan is prepared to consent to any condition for the attainment of his purpose. An unhappy, poverty-stricken fellow, weary of his condition, and in desperate mood, resolves, one Christmas eve, to obtain wealth and pleasure for this life, even at the risk of his immortal soul. He called for the prince of darkness, who immediately appeared.

The man then found his desires somewhat tempered by fear, but the trifle of a mortal's apprehension did not phase the Arch-Enemy. In reply to Satan's inquiry as to the conditions of the bargain, the peasant proposed terms so exacting that he thought even the Evil One, with all the kingdoms of this world at his disposal, could not fulfill. "I promise my soul to you ten years hence," said the farmer, "if you will agree to build me a house, furnish it, build stables and out-houses and stock them, all to be ready by cock-crow to-morrow morning". To his astonishment and horror his terms were agreed to, and the bargain was signed at once in blood taken from his own arm. In a few minutes a crowd of imps appeared and set to work. The buildings began to rise from the earth, as if by enchantment, stores of all kinds being brought into them, and all the stock, as agreed upon, driven within.

The peasant's wife began to wonder what all such proceedings meant, and when she obtained an explanation, she set her wits at work to circumvent the devil. About half an hour before daylight the entire circuit of buildings was completed, with the exception of an outer door or so, when the woman rushed to the fowl-house and threw wide open the door. The

chanticleer, thinking that the sudden burst of light must be daybreak, gave out his shrill salute. Instantly the whole industrious but infernal pack scattered, the Evil One himself flying off in a terrible rage, leaving the air heavy with a highly suggestive odor of sulphur. At cock-crow the devil's power over mortals ceases, according to all traditions.

Another story of triumph over Satan is of a man who formed a compact with Old Nick, and for whom the time had come when his part of the bargain must be kept. He was notified to make ready for his descent to the lower regions. He, at first, pretended to believe that there was a mistake in the date; but the agreement in writing, with its sanguinary signature, was produced. Yet it did not seem pleasant for the fellow to take leave of this upper world, so he essayed to evade payment of his debt. He bethought himself of a trick in connection with a wooden chest he was making and which he hoped might save him. He told the devil that he knew a man bigger than he, who could easily get into it, and offered a wager that he could not. The latter, wishing to show that he could do what any mortal could, accepted the bet. He contracted and diminished himself until he got into the chest. Immediately

the peasant slammed down the lid and nailed it fast with blessed nails. The devil, recognizing his helplessness against that fastening, in the Holy Name, submitted to new conditions from his triumphant captor. According to tradition, the mortal does not generally escape so easily from the clutches of the devil; the latter more frequently gains his end and secures the soul he has tempted. The priest or the resort to some religious rite may save the victim, if these interventions are timely. Aided by the proper inflection of voice, the right emphasis on certain passages, appropriate gestures and significant glances of the eye, the narrator would create not only fear of the prince of darkness, but merriment and rejoicing over the fact that Old Nick had been worsted in a contest with a mortal.

One godless farmer wandered about in pure idleness one Christmas Eve, instead of going to midnight mass, when he suddenly found himself close by a motley crowd of imps, infidel, sorcerers and lost spirits, holding a midnight carousal ("sabbat") in a forest glade, under the white moon beams. All were dancing and grimacing in a state of great glee. To the great surprise and horror of the looker-on he saw several of his neighbors among the group. Soon the devil

himself appeared in a carriage drawn by imps. After distributing black candles among the revelling crowd, he ordered them to erect an altar and to drape it in black. His majesty then donned a black stole and vestments, and began the celebration of the black mass. The bell used was one intended for a church, but which had been stolen before it was blessed. Instead of crossing himself as the priests do, the devil made the sign of the cross on the ground with his left foot and read the mass backwards. When he lifted the Host for consecration, the peasant saw that it was black, and at that moment frogs and other reptiles raised a clamor and chorus of lugubrious wails. After mass all the participants advanced, each holding a lighted candle of black wax, and with respectful obeisance kissed the devil's caudal appendage, while he looked grimly on. Just then the venturesome countryman was seen, and immediately surrounded and ordered to take a black taper and pay his homage to "Old Charley" by the rearward salute. He was about to obey when he remembered the tradition as to the mighty power of the name of God, over the arch-enemy, and he boldly expressed his readiness to do their bidding if it were the will of God. Instantly the whole

wild rabble vanished from sight, the air being rent with fierce imprecations. As they conclude this yarn the conteur exchanges glances of satisfaction with the audience over the defeat of the common enemy, Satan.

"Touchin on and appertainin to," the *Loup Garou*, he is represented as an awe-inspiring entity, a fruitful subject for myths and tales, by these oracles. They describe him as eating wicked children and endeavoring to cause the loss of all the souls he can. They make him work on a kind of double-action principle, sometimes to alarm for malice only, and again to deter from evil and scare sinners into penitence and restitution. The incorrigible and hardened offenders are threatened with being transformed into wehr-wolves, or receiving the appalling visits of the dreaded night-ranger, whose power for harm is set forth in scores of stories that are intended to make the hair stand on end. To keep away for seven years from the sacraments may lead to this form of punishment. The transformation may be only during the night, when the victim is compelled by a perpetual restlessness and uncontrollable viciousness to wander over the fields and valleys and injure all whom he meets. The man-wolf is capable, they

tell us, of assuming countless shapes and of being nearly ubiquitous, doing what he likes and in whatever way he pleases. It would appear that when he regains the human shape he is not aware of what took place during his nightly wanderings. This sort of slavery continues until some accidental blood-letting restores him to his original shape by the mercy of Providence.

One of the stories related refers to a farmer returning home late one night, who was set upon by a large goat. After a desperate struggle, he finally succeeded in drawing a knife and wounding the animal. To his amazement the goat turned into a man, who gratefully thanked him for his release from a bondage that he said had lasted over a year. He was recognized as a near neighbor, who for some bad action had been transformed into a wehr-wolf. They both joyfully returned home.

A clever ex-stipendiary magistrate of this city tells of a Loup Garou story of a lighter and gayer kind, which I understand he heard from a famous conteur named Morin, who was endowed with rare creative powers. It runs along the following lines: A simple peasant started one day for the Quebec market to sell a cow.

Before reaching the city he was obliged to go a little way from the main road, when he tied his cow to a tree to prevent her wandering off. While he was absent two thieves appeared and one proposed to steal the animal, saying: "You fix the rope around your neck and pretend to be a man-wolf, while I run away with the cow". And, as the story-tellers say: *Qui fut dit fit fait*. In other words this plan was immediately put into execution. The tethered thief was soon approached by the unsuspecting habitant, who missing his cow, inquired sheepishly

1 anxiously: "Where is my cow"?
The rascal, with simulated gratitude and an effusive manner, said: "Ah, my friend, what a service you have done me. For four long years I have been transformed into a cow because I displeased a sorcerer. You cannot know what misery has been mine during those years, away from my own kind, and doomed to the company of animals. When you tied me to the tree the cord slipped and wounded me under the ear, and I was restored to my original condition. Oh, my deliverer and benefactor, I shall never be able to repay you the great debt of gratitude I have just incurred." The sincere air and clever knavery of the robber caused the innocent farmer to believe his tale. Gen-

erously smothering his regret at his loss, he began to sympathize with the rogue. Presently he requested that he might call with him upon his wife. Reaching home, the deluded habitant pointed him out to his wife as the representative of his cow, when the poor credulous woman, with mingled sorrow over her loss and pious gratitude for the saving of the man, exclaimed: "Oh, what fine milk you gave sir. Do you see that heifer over there? That's yours, and such good cream as we got from you. Ah, mon Dieu!"

The conteurs tell of mysterious phenomena connected with most of the notable days of the year. On Christmas eve the spirits of the dead are believed to visit the churches, march up the aisles to the altar, and deposit an offering. The person doomed to die first, will be warned by the presence of his own image in the procession. Persons born on the same day and hour as our Saviour, have the gift of wraith-seeing, that is of beholding spirits invisible to others. They are also exempt from ever experiencing want. On the eve of Christmas, at midnight, the whole animal creation kneels in homage to the infant Jesus. They are then gifted with the faculty of speech and commune with each other in praise or censure of the conduct of their masters. And they

resolve to do good or inefficient service according to the treatment they have received. You must not listen to their utterances, lest you should hear mention of your own untimely death, or of misfortune to your household, of which they are said to have knowledge. Horses and cattle also have intimations of their impending fate on that day.

On All Saints' day, we are told, the spirits march around the cemetery in truly grave procession, the younger ghostlings preceding the older, ringing bells and chanting the mass for the dead. The following day, *Le jour des Morts*, no farmer plows the land for fear of dishonoring the dead (*de peur de profaner les morts*), who are believed to be scattered all over the earth on this day. If they plowed, traces of blood would appear in the furrows or some misfortune would befall them hereafter. On the night of the same day the wraith-seers will behold the spirits of the living, which enables them to foretell coming events. Those entering and leaving the church in couples, will marry within the year, while those who have entered and not left together, will die soon. Many other existing superstitions troop to the mind, but I must forego.

They tell of many religious legends of

a poetic character, one of which is connected with the birth of Our Redeemer. Previous to this event so important to Christianity, the terrestrial flora was incomplete, for there were no white roses. One day while the Holy Virgin was nursing the Infant Jesus, a drop of her milk fell on a beautiful red rose, close by, and it immediately took on the delicate and pure white of the lily. A second legend relates to the death-scene at Golgotha. Our Saviour in His agony, called for water, and a Roman soldier to mock his anguish, offered a sponge soaked with vinegar. A bird, beholding the sufferings and tortures of the Redeemer of men, flew to a neighboring spring, filled his beak with water, and dropped it between the open and parched lips of Our Lord. Meanwhile, a drop of Christ's precious blood had touched his greyish throat and turned it into red. In memory of the part the robin red-breast is supposed to have taken on that most solemn of all occasions, it is held in particular affection by the *habitans*.

*"Et tric, crac, mon conte est fini
Pour un sou, dis-en un plus joli."*



